

Montana Department of  
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

**Child Care for TANF Participants**

**CHILD CARE**

Subject:

**OPA, WoRC & CCR&R Coordination**

**Supersedes:** **Child Care 3-1 (9/1/06)**

**References:** **52-2-701 – 704 & 52-2-711 – 713 MCA**  
**Sections 37.80.101-103, 37.80.201-202, 37.80.205-206, 37.80.301-302,**  
**37.80.305-306, 37.80.315-316, 37.80.501 ARM**  
**45 CFR Part 98.20 – 47**

### **General Rule**

Parents participating in the TANF Cash Assistance program administered by the State of Montana contact their WoRC Case Manager to arrange for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship for Family Investment Agreement (FIA)/ WoRC Employability Plan (EP) activities that require child care. The WoRC Case Manager makes an electronic referral to the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agency (DPHHS – CC-051) and the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application (DPHHS-CC-010) will be available to TANF parents in each local WoRC office. Child Care assistance will not start until an electronic referral form is received at the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may begin on the date the CCR&R receives the electronic referral form. The parent then has 30 days from the date of the WoRC referral to submit a completed Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application to the CCR&R.

The CCR&R issues the Child Care Certification Plan based on the FIA/EP activities that require child care. When the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship begins, the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist mails a copy of the Child Care Certification Plan to the WoRC Case Manager.

### **Application & CCUBS Processing**

A family participating in the TANF cash program completes the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application. The TEAMS interface may be used to verify TANF participation, activity hours, and income for each family member. The application notifies the family of their rights and responsibilities.

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The application must be completed and submitted to the CCR&R within 30 days of the child care referral by the WoRC Case Manager or the case will be closed.

It is important that all income and activity information is entered in CCUBS because the following processes are dependant on the information:

- ☐ The family may choose to be eligible if there is a Non-TANF waiting list.
- ☐ Data is used for federal reporting purposes.
- ☐ Data is used in aggregate form to profile the population served by the program.

In the first 30 days of the TANF participant's application process and TANF Cash benefits can not be verified on TEAMS, the CCR&R worker must:

- ⇒ Enter \$1 for TANF Cash benefits on the CCUBS Person screen;
- ⇒ Enter \$1 for Food Stamp benefits; and
- ⇒ Enter \$1 for housing or rent benefits.
- ⇒ Once TANF benefits are authorized, the CCR&R eligibility specialist must update the Person screen with the available information using the TEAMS interface.

**Qualifying  
Families &  
Children  
Participating in  
TANF Cash**

Parents who need child care to perform Family Investment Activities/ Employability Plan (FIA)/ (EP) activities are eligible for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. Children are not required to be part of the TANF Cash assistance unit.

EXAMPLE: A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be provided for a child, who has returned to the caretaker relative's home for the school summer months. They may not be part of the TANF Cash assistance unit because they will be returning to the custodial caretaker relative before the start of the new school year.

EXAMPLE: A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be provided for a minor child receiving Supplemental Security Income

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(SSI), Title IV-E Foster Care, or not included in the TANF Cash assistance unit for failing an eligibility requirement.

Additionally, a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be provided for a teen parent, living with a specified caretaker relative, if needed for secondary school attendance hours.

**EXAMPLE:** A teen parent lives with her father and attends high school. Because she is attending high school, she is not required to have a FIA/EP. However, she is eligible for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship during her school hours.

Parents and children are subject to general eligibility requirements, as outlined in Child Eligibility in Section 1-6 and Parent Eligibility in Section 1-7.

**Child Only Grant** Children who receive a child-only TANF Cash grant may participate in a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. The parent must apply and be eligible for a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.

**Qualified Child Care Provider** Families receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship must use either a licensed, registered or legally unregistered provider (LUP) approved for payment purposes, as outlined in Provider Eligibility in Section 1-8.

**WoRC Refers Family to CCR&R** The WoRC Case Manager will ~~not~~ refer a family to the Child Care Resource and Referral agency before TANF Cash Assistance benefits are authorized. The need for child care usually begins when the TANF Cash Assistance eligibility process is pending and TANF benefits are pending. The CCR&R will authorize child care for 30 days until TANF Cash Assistance has been authorized. The TANF family will not incur an overpayment if benefits are denied during this 30 day period.

A family may need assistance in finding a child care provider. In these

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situations, the WoRC Case Manager may request the family to contact the CCR&R to receive a listing of possible child care providers.

If a child care scholarship is recommended, the WoRC Case Manager refers the family using an electronic referral form (DPHHS – CC-051) to the CCR&R:

- ❑ The referral for child care is e-mailed to the CCR&R.
- ❑ The CCR&R must print a copy for file.
- ❑ The WoRC Case Manager may assist the family by mailing the completed Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application to the CCR&R within 30 days of the referral.

Coordinate services:

- ❑ The WoRC Case Manager interviews the family and determines the amount of child care needed and the child care schedule:
- ❑ The WoRC Case Manager reviews the weekly FIA/EP activities to corroborate the need for child care.
- ❑ When a need for child care has been determined, the WoRC Case Manager shall e-mail the referral form (DPHHS – CC-051) to the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist to complete FIA/EP activities.

NOTE: CCUBS does not receive any alerts from TEAMS until the WoRC Case Manager contacts the CCR&R and the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist registers the TEAMS Person ID numbers in CCUBS.

- ❑ If a sanction is upheld and the case goes to closure, the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist will receive an alert in CCUBS.
- ❑ TANF parents may be responsible for the cost of child care that is used for activities not related to their FIA/EP. If child care is used for activities not related to the family's FIA/EP schedule, the family may have an overpayment. The CCR&R will process the overpayment.

⇒ The CCR&R enters the case into CCUBS upon receiving a referral from the WoRC Case Manager.

⇒ The CCR&R uses the TEAMS Person ID# on the CCUBS 'TEAMS Person Information' interface to gather basic demographic

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information, such as their Social Security number.

- ⇒ The CCR&R uses the Head of Household's address for the Mailing Address of the family in CCUBS.

NOTE: In the event of a case closure notice or any notice in which an adverse action is being taken, the CCR&R worker will need to send the notice to both the WoRC Case Manager's agency office and to the family's home address.

- ⇒ If the family decides to use a legally unregistered provider, the CCR&R processes the LUP application.
- ⇒ The CCR&R issues a child care certification plan for an initial referral for 60 days plus the remaining days in that month using a 30 hour varied schedule plus time for travel. The referral will indicate the total amount of time that child care is needed.

EXAMPLE: The family is referred on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. The CCR&R approves the certification period until March 31<sup>st</sup>.

- ⇒ After the initial referral, certification plans should be issued according to a daily schedule and for a 3-month period. WoRC Case Managers may authorize exceptions to a daily schedule requirement.
- ⇒ The WoRC Case Manager may request the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist to adjust the child care certification plan when the need for child care changes.
- ⇒ The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist will close the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship if the family no longer needs child care to perform FIA/EP activities, the family has not paid their co-payment, or their TANF closes.

**CCR&R Notifies  
WoRC Case  
Manager**

When the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship begins, the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist mails a copy of the Child Care Certification Plan to the WoRC Case Manager.

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**Re-certifying  
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A re-certification reminder is mailed to the family six weeks before their child care certification plan expires.

NOTE: If the certification plan is less than six weeks, CCUBS may not automatically generate a re-certification reminder. The CCR&R is responsible for generating appropriate notices for the parent and the provider.

**WoRC Case  
Manager Notifies  
CCR&R**

For a family transitioning from TANF to Non-TANF child care assistance, the WoRC Case Manager shall notify the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist if the family is eligible for the Fill-the-Gap child care policy, as outlined in Section 6-6.

**Family Loses  
Eligibility**

Families may lose eligibility during a child care certification plan. Evaluate the circumstances in an effort to offer continuity of care for the child and family, as outlined in Continuity of Care in Section 6-6. The family loses Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship eligibility if:

- ☐ They lose eligibility for TANF;
- ☐ They fail to pay the required co-payment fees within the month due;
- ☐ There is no qualifying child in the home; or
- ☐ The parent has been sanctioned and there is no longer a need for child care during FIA/EP activities.

**Loss of TANF  
Cash Eligibility**

The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist will receive a closure alert from TEAMS and will:

- ⇒ End-date the certification plan concurrent with the end of the TANF Cash benefit month, or before, if warranted.
- ⇒ Evaluate eligibility for Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.
- ⇒ Notify the parent and provider if child care will end before the certification plan expires.
- ⇒ Case note the closure reason.
- ⇒ Case note the assessment leading to the closure, when the family

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### **Sanctions**

no longer needs care to continue FIA activities.

If a parent is sanctioned, a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be offered if the participant is complying with portions of the FIA/EP agreement.

- Child care assistance may still be available in two situations:
  - Partial FIA/EP compliance - if the parent and WoRC Case Manager agree to continue some FIA/EP activities.
  - A need is established when one parent is participating in TANF Cash and the other parent is disqualified. The WoRC Case Manager will determine if there is a need for child care.

After the sanction period has been served, the family has the option to leave the TANF Cash Assistance program and apply for a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.

### **TANF Work Support Payment**

When a family's TANF is closed due to earned income, they may receive a TANF Work Support payment. The TANF Work Support payment is money to help the participant bridge the gap between the closure of TANF Cash Assistance and the receipt of employment income into the household.

The TANF Cash Assistance Program does not consider the family to be categorized as TANF during this month and the month does not count towards the family's 60-month time clock for receiving TANF Cash Assistance. The ECSB does consider the TANF Work Support payment to be TANF assistance and therefore the CCR&R should continue to keep the family categorized as TANF until the end of the month in which the Work Support payment was received.

### **Dependent Care Disregard**

OPA Eligibility Case Managers determine TANF eligibility. A dependent care disregard for out-of-pocket dependent care expenses is used when determining income available to TANF participants. The portion of the family's income used to pay for dependent care, up to \$200 per individual per month, is excluded from the family's income when determining TANF eligibility.

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**Co-payment  
Requirement**

Each family receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is required to contribute toward the cost of the child care scholarship based on the family's ability to pay. The co-payment is based on a sliding fee scale. Families eligible for TANF Cash benefits have a \$10 monthly co-payment.

**TANF Families  
Require  
Affordable,  
Appropriate,  
Suitable Care  
Within a  
Reasonable  
Distance**

CCR&Rs, in conjunction with the WoRC Case Manager, shall inform the families participating in the TANF Cash Assistance program that they are exempt from penalties for non-participation in required activities if they need child care and cannot find child care for children under age six that is appropriate, affordable, suitable, and within a reasonable distance. These terms are defined as follows:

Affordable Child Care means the total parental (caretaker relative or person acting in loco parentis) co-payment and 'above and beyond' obligation does not exceed 25% of gross family income.

Appropriate Child Care means the child care provider must meet applicable state licensing/registration standards.

Reasonable Distance means:

- a. If the family is without either their own (or arranged) transportation, and there is no public transportation, then their home or work site must be no more than 1 mile from the child care provider.
- b. If the family has their own (or arranged) transportation, their home or work site is within one-hour travel distance, one-way, from the child care provider.

Unsuitable Informal Care means care, which does not meet applicable state licensing standards even though it may be the parent's choice.

**Serving the Family**

Families may lose eligibility for a brief period during a transition. Policies



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are available to maintain continuity of care for the child and maintain an established relationship with the child's provider, as outlined in Section 6 of this manual. Additional Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship management issues are addressed in the same section.

**Family  
Transitioning from  
TANF to Non-  
TANF Child Care  
Assistance**

When TANF is closed, the family must apply for Non-TANF Child Care assistance at the local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency. The CCR&R will interview the family to determine if the Fill-the-Gap policy should be applied to insure the continuity of care for the children.

- ⇒ The CCR&R will notify the family and child care provider at least ten days in advance of closing the TANF child care case.
- ⇒ The CCR&R distributes a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application to the family.
- ⇒ If applicable, the CCR&R may determine the family is eligible for Fill-the-Gap.

**Reading the EMPL  
Information**



The following table summarizes Family Investment Activity/ Employability Plan FIA/ EP codes used on the TEAMS EMPL screen.

Note: Several FIA/EP activities do not require child care and some activities do not require child care for the total time allotted to the activity.

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<b>TEAMS FIA/EP CODE</b>	<b>FIA DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Req'd FIA/EP?</b>	<b>Need Child Care?</b>
ABE	ADULT BASIC ED.	N	Yes, for scheduled class time, out of the home.
CSP	COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS	N	Limited Usage
EBI	EXTENDED BENEFITS INCAPACITY	N	May require child care
EMP	EMPLOYMENT	N	Yes, based on interview.
FHP	FAIR HEARING PENDING	N	No
HNA	HRS NOT ACCOUNTD FR	N	No
HNC	HOURS NOT COMPLETED	N	No
HSE	HIGH SCHOOL ED.	N	Yes, for school hours
JBS	JOB SEARCH	N	Yes, based on interview.
JST	JOB SKILLS TRAINING	N	Yes, based on interview
MAE	ACCEPT & MAINT EMPL	Y	No
NCC	NO LONG-TERM CHILD CARE AVAILABLE	N	No
NEW	TRIBAL NEW	N	Yes, based on interview
	<i>the WRC code, total hours are listed for the Tribal New referral. Unlike the WoRC program, TEAMS does not carry detailed information regarding Tribal New activities or components. Base the child care certification plan on the participant interview.</i>		
NIH	NEEDED IN HOME TO CARE FOR DISABLED CHILD OR FAMILY MEMBER	N	No
NPI	NOT PARTICIPATING DUE TO INCAPACITY	N	May require child care, (ie. someone who has a medical emergency).
STT	SHORT TERM TRAINING	N	Yes, for scheduled class time, out of the home.
WEX	WORK EXPERIENCE	N	Yes, based on interview.
WRC	WORC COMPONENT	N	Yes, based on interview.
	<i>WRC code generates the EMPL screen. WoRC components are coded the same as the FIA components.</i>		